



The Ark Federation

FEDERATION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NUMBER 9
December 2023



Merry Christmas Everyone!

All of the staff at the Ark Academies would like to wish our families a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. We hope that the festive season is full of laughter and memories and we look forward to seeing you back in school in 2024.

Term starts on Thursday 4th January 2024



Christmas at the Ark

Christmas at the Ark has been a whirlwind of festive activity.

Thank you to all of the parents that have attended the activities across both schools. It has been lovely to see so many of you in school celebrating Christmas with your children.

A few special thank yous...

The Friends' of Moorlands - The Friends of Moorlands have been absolute stars. They have run a wide variety of fundraising events, raising over £1000. They planned and delivered a super Christmas fete and helped out wherever they could throughout the festive period. Thank you very much from all the staff and children.

The staff of both schools - The teachers and support staff at both schools have really pulled out the stops this year to make sure that Christmas is a special time of year for every child. They have prepped plays and concerts, planned art and craft and helped out at a variety of events.

Gifts and cards - Thank you to all of the children and families that have kindly given cards and gifts to their teachers and support staff. Your kindness makes a big difference.

Our local Churches - Thank you to All Saints and Mary Mags for their support during the Christmas season. It has been lovely to use our churches as part of our festive celebrations - the Christmas workshops were a particular highlight - the children loved them!



shout out

Staff Shout Outs

The wonderful staff at the Ark schools have been working hard all year to provide the best possible education for your children.

Shout outs for December...

Well done to the Peterhouse staff for pulling together and getting through their recent OFSTED inspection!

Thank you to Mrs Mathers, Mrs Fogden and Mrs Cannon for lending their hand to pretty much every role in the school over the past few weeks - We all hope you have a well deserved rest!

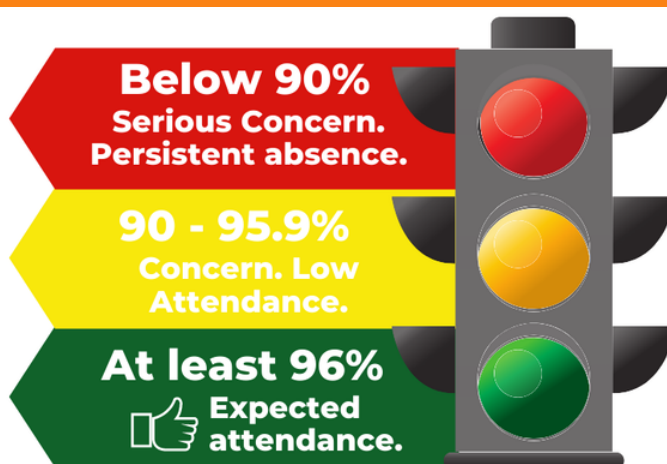
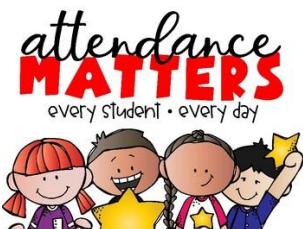
Thanks to Noel the Elf from Moorlands - your antics over the last few weeks have cheered us all up - Especially Mr Siddles!

Attendance

As this term comes to a close we will be celebrating all of our pupils who have achieved excellent attendance this term. The Ark Federation has been extremely lucky this term as we have been donated two family tickets from the Hippodrome Circus for both Peterhouse and Moorlands. Our fantastic 100% attendees will be entered into a prize draw so two lucky families will be able to attend 'The Christmas Spectacular 2023'. These two families will be telephoned and given the good news!!

I am delighted that our attendance in both Academies is slowly improving, but still have some work ahead and I look forward to working with you in 2024!!

Merry Christmas from Mr Mobbs.



Expected attendance means having no more than seven days off this school year!



School Dog

Check out the School Dog Blog: <http://theark.dneat.org/school-dog/>

Lily produces a blog when she is in school, often with photos of her exploits - why not check it out.

Parent Support

Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

If you are struggling this Christmas time, just text the word SHOUT to 85258 to start a conversation with someone who will listen.

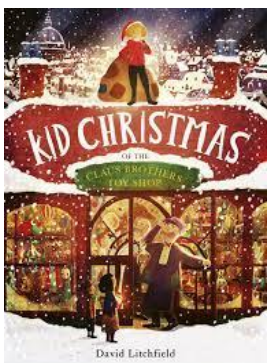
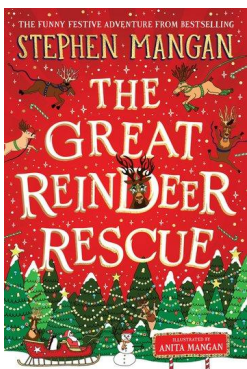
shout
85258
here for you 24/7

Feeling low?

Anxious?

Struggling
to cope?

**Text
SHOUT
to 85258**
for free,
confidential
support, 24/7



Mr Biddle Recommends

There are some wonderful Christmassy books around for children to enjoy reading over the next few weeks. Both the books mentioned below were published very recently and are already well on the way to becoming Christmas classics.

The Great Reindeer Rescue, written by Steven Mangan and illustrated by Anita Mangan (ages 8-11)

Christmas is in danger of not happening because all of Santa's reindeer have gone missing. Can a reindeer called Dave and a girl called Holly save the day? Lots of fun and a story bursting with energy. It's one that will be popular with both children and parents!

Kid Christmas of the Claus Brother Toy Shop, written and illustrated by David Litchfield (ages 5-7)

Nicky Claus works with his three uncles in the Claus Brothers Toy Emporium. One day, he learns that lots of young children won't receive a gift at Christmas and vows that for one night only, every child will receive the toy of their dreams. A heartwarming story all about kindness, generosity and the importance of empathy.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about



WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service, with around two billion users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls. Its end-to-end encryption means messages can only be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp can read them. Updates to its privacy policy in 2021 (involving sharing data with parent company Facebook) caused millions to leave the app, but the new policy was widely misinterpreted – it only related to WhatsApp's business features, not to personal messages.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SCAMS

Fraudsters occasionally send WhatsApp messages pretending to offer prizes – encouraging the user to click on a link to win. Other common scams involve warning someone that their WhatsApp subscription has run out (aiming to dupe them into disclosing payment details) or impersonating a friend or relative and asking for money to be transferred to help with an emergency.

DISAPPEARING MESSAGES

Users can set WhatsApp messages to disappear in 24 hours, 7 days or 90 days by default. Photos and videos can also be instructed to disappear after the recipient has viewed them. These files can't be saved or forwarded – so if your child was sent an inappropriate message, it would be difficult to prove any wrongdoing. However, the receiver can take a screenshot and save that as evidence.

ENABLING FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp has unfortunately been linked to accelerating the spread of dangerous rumours. In India in 2018, some outbreaks of mob violence appear to have been sparked by false allegations being shared on the app. WhatsApp itself took steps to prevent its users circulating hazardous theories and speculation in the early weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic.

POTENTIAL CYBERBULLYING

Group chat and video calls are great for connecting with multiple people in WhatsApp, but there is always the potential for someone's feelings to be hurt by an unkind comment or joke. The 'only admins' feature gives the admin(s) of a group control over who can send messages. They can, for example, block people from posting in a chat, which could make a child feel excluded and upset.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a WhatsApp chat, you only need the mobile number of the person you want to message (the other person also needs to have the app). WhatsApp can access the address book on someone's device and recognise which of their contacts also use the app. So if your child has ever given their phone number to someone they don't know, that person could use it to contact them via WhatsApp.

LOCATION SHARING

The 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, allowing friends to see their movements. WhatsApp describes it as a "simple and secure way to let people know where you are." It is a useful method for a young person to let loved ones know they're safe – but if they used it in a chat with people they don't know, they would be exposing their location to them, too.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CLICK HERE

CREATE A SAFE PROFILE

Even though someone would need a child's phone number to add them as a contact, it's also worth altering a young person's profile settings to restrict who can see their photo and status. The options are 'everyone', 'my contacts' and 'nobody' – choosing one of the latter two ensures that your child's profile is better protected.

EXPLAIN ABOUT BLOCKING

If your child receives spam or offensive messages, calls or files from a contact, they should block them using 'settings' in the chat. Communication from a blocked contact won't show up on their device and stays undelivered. Blocking someone does not remove them from your child's contact list – so they also need to be deleted from the address book.

REPORT POTENTIAL SCAMS

Young people shouldn't engage with any message that looks suspicious or too good to be true. When your child receives a message from an unknown number for the first time, they'll be given the option to report it as spam. If the sender claims to be a friend or relative, call that person on their usual number to verify it really is them, or if it's someone trying to trick your child.

LEAVE A GROUP

If your child is in a group chat that is making them feel uncomfortable, or has been added to a group that they don't want to be part of, they can use WhatsApp's group settings to leave. If someone exits a group, the admin can add them back in once; if they leave a second time, it is permanent.

THINK ABOUT LOCATION

If your child needs to use the 'live location' function to show you or one of their friends where they are, advise them to share their location only for as long as they need to. WhatsApp gives a range of 'live location' options, and your child should manually stop sharing their position as soon as it is no longer needed.

DELETE ACCIDENTAL MESSAGES

If your child posts a message they want to delete, WhatsApp allows the user seven minutes to erase a message. Tap and hold on the message, choose 'delete' and then 'delete for everyone.' However, it's important to remember that recipients may have seen (and taken a screenshot of) a message before it was deleted.

CHECK THE FACTS

You can now fact-check WhatsApp messages that have been forwarded at least five times, by double-tapping the magnifying glass icon to the right of the message. From there, your child can launch a Google search and decide for themselves whether the message was true or not.

Meet Our Expert

Parveen Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.



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